



DERBY COLLEGE GROUP POLICY

Student Financial Support Policy

Policy Number:	STS-004
Executive Owner:	Deputy CEO Strategy & Corporate Services.
Owning Strategy / Department:	Student Engagement Strategy / Corporate and Student Services
Approval Board / Committee / Group:	Corporation Deputy CEO Strategy & Corporate Services
User Group:	All DCG Student Services employees
Relevant To:	As above
Implementation Date:	September 2023
Approval Date:	September 2023
Next Review Period Start Date:	May 2024
Expiry Date:	July 2024

Date:	September 2023
Originator:	HJ/MB
Area:	Services for Students

Once printed, this is an uncontrolled document. Refer to Policy Portal for latest version.

POLICY - PROCEDURES - GUIDELINES - RELATED DOCUMENTS

Policy Accountability and Implementation

Policy Title: Student Financial Support Policy
Policy Author / Reviewers: Director of Services for Students
Policy Implementation: Director of Services for Students/ Student Services Coordinator
Policy Monitoring and Compliance: Corporation
Policy Review Timeline: Annual
Synopsis:
To support students to reduce the financial barriers that may prevent the participating in further education.

Policy Classification and Publication

Classification

- Essential Authority (EA)

Publication

- Intranet – Policy portal

Empowering/related legislative and/or authoritative references:

ESFA Funding rules on adult education and apprenticeships

Impact Assessment reference: IA107 2014

Periodic Policy Review / Change History

Note: Please make it clear if change/review relates to procedures, guidelines and associated documents only or it is a rational for a new or substantive policy review

Version	Reviewed / Modified by:	Change History	Advisory committee / groups or specialists	Review / Meeting Date/s
V2	Head of Ilkeston and Student Support	Changed from Student Hardship Fund	Corporation	March 2012
V3	Head of Ilkeston and Student Support	All reference to the 24+ Learner Loan has been amended to Advanced Learner Loan	Corporation	July 2016
V4	Head of Ilkeston and Student Support	Amends <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Learner' amended to 'student'• Executive responsibilities updated to Deputy CEO – Strategy and Corporate services• Introduction of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) in April 2017 which replaces the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and Skills Funding Agency (SFA). All reference updated	Corporation	July 2017
V5	Director of Services for Students	Amends <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responsibilities around encouraging healthy eating and free school meals• Section explaining new GDPR guidelines• Job titles updated from Head of Ilkeston and Student Support to Director of Services for Students and Team Manager Student Support to Coordinator Student Support	Corporation	July 2018
V6	Director of Services for Students	Amends <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updated links to 2019/20 national policy guidance	Corporation	September 2019
V7	Director of Services for Students	Amends <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updated links to 2020/21 national policy guidance• 'Guarantee' bursary updated to 'Vulnerable' bursary• Inserted the following statement in the procedures document regarding COVID <p><i>NB Due to the current COVID pandemic and government guidelines regarding health and safety measures, the</i></p>	Deputy CEO Corporation	September 2020

		<p><i>procedures may be adapted to ensure the safety of staff and students. For example, the face to face communication and events outlined in these procedures may be replaced with remote methods of communication. (pg1)</i></p> <p><i>Additional temporary measures have been put in place to support students whose timetables now include remote learning due to COVID-19, these include a set travel payment, and a set meal direct payment to eligible students. (pg.1)</i></p>		
V8	Director of Services for Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated links to 2021/22 national policy guidance Link to paper application forms replaced to link to online application form Responsibility for coordination and delivery of procedures changed from 'Student Financial Coordinator' to 'Student Financial Support and Wellbeing Team Manager' Changes made to Student Financial Support Guidelines to reflect increased threshold for eligibility in terms of household income and increased daily allowance for college meals in line with national increase in cost of living Changes made to Student Financial Support Procedure to reflect transition from paper to online application process 	Deputy CEO Corporation	December 2021 January 2022
V8.1	Director of Strategy, Policy and Planning on behalf of Director of Services for Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amendment to guideline only relating to financial income eligibility allowances increasing to £25,500. 	CFO	July 2022
V9	Director of Services for Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy Document section 11 – updated all gov.uk guidance document links to 2022-23 versions. Amended next expiry date to July 2023 so updated policy is in tandem with the academic year. Implementation date will be September 2023 Produced Guidelines for 2023-2024 to be approved in November 2022 and implemented September 2023. The earlier timeline has been introduced so that new eligibility criteria can be promoted to students applying for the academic year 2023-34. Two guidelines in operation now – 2022-23 guidelines and 2023-24 guidelines. The eligibility thresholds for 2023-24 academic year have been changed for 16-18 Discretionary Bursary, 19+ Student Support Fund and Advanced Learner Loans, to an income of under £31,000 net, to receive financial support for travel expenses or with net earnings less than £25,500 to receive for all other qualifying financial support. Previously net earnings of less than £25,500 for any financial support from these funds was the criteria. Added the line 'DCG reserves the right to change the eligibility income thresholds subject to the availability of funds' to the 2023-24 guidelines. 	CFO	September 2022 FRC 2.12.22 Corporation 12.12.22
V10	Director of Services for Students	<p>Minor amends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated links in the policy document in relation to 2023-24 national policy guidance documents (section 11) Student Financial Support Guidance Document amend– the following information has been added in the 16-19 Discretionary Bursary section (in accordance with government guidance document) <p><i>Current eligibility for free meals only requires a single check of household income for each phase of education (primary, secondary or 16 to 19). In making decisions about bursary awards, in accordance with government guidance, DCG can now exercise discretion as to whether checks are carried out annually or just once at the beginning of a student's study programme. Where DCG decides not to carry out annual checks of bursary fund eligibility, DCG will ensure a signed and dated (hard copy or electronic) self-declaration form is obtained from the student to confirm that their household circumstances has not changed.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Financial Support Procedure amend– the following information has been added; <p><i>Students applying for the 16-19 Discretionary Bursary, who are successful in their application for financial assistance, will continue to receive support with travel, meals on site, mandatory trips and course materials throughout their study</i></p>	Director of Finance	September 2023

		<i>programme without the necessity to reapply at the beginning of each academic year. They will be sent a short online form before the summer break to ask if they intend to return and to ask for confirmation that their financial situation hasn't changed. This will remain the case until they reach the age of 19, at which point they would need to apply for help from the 19+ support fund.</i>		
--	--	--	--	--

1. Policy Statement

DCG is committed to supporting students to reduce the financial barriers that may prevent students in participating in further education. The College has used its allocation of student support funding to create a student support fund that will help with the costs associated with studying; this includes;

- The Vulnerable Bursary and Discretionary Bursary for students age 16-18
- The Student Support Fund for students age 19 and above.
- The Advanced Learner Loan Bursary for students aged 19 and above
- Further Education Free Meals

The College is also committed to providing information, advice and guidance to support students' access and apply for centrally allocated funding such as Care to Learn and Advanced Learner Loans.

2. Definitions

The Student Support Fund is a sum of money awarded annually by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to Educational Institutions. This is to provide financial help for students whose access to, or completion of education, is inhibited by financial constraints or barriers.

3. Principles

The Student Financial Support Fund must be administered in accordance with specifications laid down in the ESFA guidance documents (see appendix). The administration of the Fund must take into account any changes outlined in the guidance and implement them accordingly. Some areas of funding are ring-fenced and can only be used for those purposes, whereas other categories can have funds vired between them. Each academic year the Student Support Fund will be renewed and at the end of each year, any unspent funds may be returned to the Local Funding Office.

- All students will have the opportunity to apply for the Student Support Fund. Funding is publicised through a range of sources both written and verbal.
- Student support funding/bursary is a finite fund and is distributed on a first come first served basis, however the Vulnerable Bursary and Further Education Free Meals funding is awarded according to need.
- As long as students still meet the eligibility criteria, they will receive support for the duration of their course.
- Student support funds/bursary must be used to help pay for course related costs, such as books, equipment, trips and travel.
- Any remaining monies after deduction of course related costs, for students eligible for the Vulnerable Bursary will be paid monthly, in equal instalments.
- Students have the right to appeal decisions regarding student support applications.
- There are robust measures in place to actively manage the risk of fraud, documentation will be required as proof when applying for a bursary. Students are required to provide their own bank account details where possible.
- The College reserves the right to withhold payments if students withdraw early from their course, whatever the reason.
- Students are required to meet specific levels of attendance and behaviour in order to continue to receive the support fund/bursary. Part of any financial assistance provided may be repayable in these circumstances. The College can determine the amount requested to be repaid.
- Support is only available to students who have no outstanding debt with the College.

4. Scope and Limitations

The Student Support Funds are available to 16-18 and 19+ students enrolled on Further Education courses full-time or part-time, starting from the beginning of the academic year in September, who meet the required eligibility criteria.

If the eligibility criteria are met, students will receive financial support to help pay for course related costs such as, books, equipment, trips and travel where appropriate. The College will, wherever possible, make these payments on the student's behalf.

The Care to Learn Fund is a childcare support scheme which is targeted at students up to 20 years of age. The fund supports the financial cost of childcare provision up to a maximum weekly allowance. This is a nationally distributed, non means tested fund that is available to apply for at any point throughout the year.

The Advanced Learner Loans are available for students starting their programme of study from September 2023. Advanced Learner Loans are available for students aged 19 and above at the start of their course who intend to undertake a level 3,4,5 or 6 qualification which is eligible for loan funding. Level 3 to 6 qualifications include A levels, Access to HE diplomas and other Vocational Qualifications. These loans do not cover Degrees or other forms of Higher Education where separate student support arrangements exist.

Further Education Free Meals Funding first became available from September 2014 and has a set eligibility criterion. This is available for students aged 16-18 years old at the start of their course or students aged 19-24 years old with an Education, Health and Care Plan. Support for meals is fixed at £4.00 per day per student from this fund.

5. Responsibilities

The Director of Services for Students is responsible for the development, implementation and monitoring of the arrangements covered by this Policy.

The Student Financial Support and Wellbeing Team Manager and Student Financial Support Team are responsible for the co-ordination and delivery of the procedures covered by this Policy

The Management Information Services team will support the data management system to ensure the implementation of Advanced Learner Loans.

6. Implementation Arrangements

All new employees are made aware of the Policy and procedures during the formal employee induction process. Updated and amended procedures are disseminated and reinforced in training sessions and team meetings.

Employees and students have access to this Policy on the college intranet.

The College will continue to work with internal and external partners to ensure that information, advice and guidance regarding the Student Support Fund is holistic and made available to prospective and current students including students accessing off site programmes of study.

7. Monitoring and Review

The Student Financial Support Policy is subject to regular review. The Policy and the implementation arrangements which underpin it will be formally reviewed on an annual basis. This review will take into account the views of employees and students and relevant local and national planning and guidance documents. The College reserves the right to make whatever changes it deems appropriate.

Managing the risk of fraud

It is a requirement to actively manage the Fund as securely as possible, and to take measures to reduce the risk of fraud. These include:

- Means testing – either internally, or by checking appropriate government guidance documents.
- Involvement of programme tutors and databases to confirm attendance.
- Involving the Senior Management Team/Governors in ensuring that robust arrangements are in place.
- Following established college financial regulations.
- Ensuring that students in receipt of childcare funding can prove that they are the main carer for the child requiring support.
- Full regular internal and external audits, and random checks to identify any areas of concern.
- Provision of a full annual report of spending patterns.
- Establishing that there is specific financial need for each student applying for support.

8. Guidelines

Guidelines can be found in the [Student Financial Support 2023-2024 Guidelines](#) document.

9. Procedures

Procedures can be found in the [Student Financial Support Procedure](#) document.

10. Templates / Forms

The Student Financial Support Application Form is now online, and can be accessed through the student's intouch account by following this link [Log in - DCG \(derby-college.ac.uk\)](#)

11. Related Documents

[Free meals in further education funded institutions guide: 2023 to 2024 academic year - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Residential Bursary Fund 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Advanced learner loans funding rules: 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Advanced learner loans funding rules: 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Care to Learn Guide for the 2023 to 2024 academic year - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
[16 to 19 education: funding guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children's social care settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)